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INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
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RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3525  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3728  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000240

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA  
ALSO FOR IO/PDAS WARLICK  
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY  
USUN FOR WOLFF/GERMAIN/SCHEDLBAUER  
NSC FOR MCDERMOTT, SHAPIRO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/26/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [UNSC](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: THREE SUSPECTS RELEASED FOUR DAYS BEFORE  
START OF THE SPECIAL TRIBUNAL

REF: BEIRUT 109

Classified By: Charge William Grant or reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

1. (C) Examining Magistrate Saqr Saqr released on bail three suspects in the Hariri assassination case on February 25. They had been incarcerated since late 2005 and early 2006. All three could still be charged and prosecuted by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), scheduled to begin March 1. Saqr gave no explanation for the release of the three suspects, but subsequently stated publicly he would deny all requests for release of the four generals who remain in custody. Embassy has requested an appointment with Lebanon's General Prosecutor to seek additional information.

2. (SBU) Meanwhile, on February 25, Justice Minister Ibrahim Najjar affirmed that Lebanese judicial authorities would comply with requests from the STL, although the Council of Ministers the next day postponed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the STL that Najjar requested because opposition ministers asked for more time to study it. End summary.

THREE SUSPECTS RELEASED

3. (SBU) On February 25, Examining Magistrate Saqr Saqr released, without explanation, three of the seven suspects detained in connection with the 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and 22 others. The three suspects released were Lebanese brothers Ahmad and Mahmoud Abdul Aal and Syrian national Ibrahim Jarjoura. The brothers were arrested without charge in 2005, while Jarjoura was arrested without charge in 2006. The brothers were released on bail of Lebanese Pounds 500,000 (approximately USD 330), while Jarjoura's bail was set at Lebanese Pounds 100,000 (approximately USD 67).

BUT FOUR GENERALS REMAIN

4. (SBU) Although free on bail, the Aal brothers and Jarjoura could still be charged and prosecuted by the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), scheduled to begin March 1.

Meanwhile, "the four generals," former General Security chief General Jamil Sayyed, former chief of Army Intelligence General Raymond Azar, former Internal Security Forces chief General Ali Hajj, and the former commander of the Presidential Guard Brigade General Mustafa Hamdan, remain in custody.

¶5. (C) In a public statement February 27, Saqr said he would deny requests to release the four generals, but gave no explanation for the release of the others. Embassy officers have requested a meeting with General Prosecutor Said Mirza to learn more about the release.

JUSTICE MINISTER PROMOTES  
COOPERATION WITH THE STL  
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¶6. (SBU) Minister of Justice Ibrahim Najjar reaffirmed to the press February 25 that Lebanon's judicial authorities would "hand over all documents...and detainees" to the Tribunal. He insisted that the transfer of files and detainees does not fall under the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers (the cabinet). In a February 26 cabinet meeting, the ministers agreed to postpone a decision to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the STL recommended by Najjar after March 8-allied opposition ministers demanded time to study the proposal. The MOU, recommended by Najjar, would clarify the relationship between the Lebanese Justice ministry and the STL. At the same meeting, the ministers agreed to install cameras to monitor the homes of officials involved in the court and at the Justice Palaces in Baabda, Jdeideh and

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (C) Najjar's continuous reaffirmations that the GOL will hand over all matters and persons, as requested, to the STL echo those of PM Siniora. It indicates Lebanon's intention to cooperate fully with the Tribunal. End comment.  
GRANT